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ABSTRACT

A profile of white faculty members at Fayetteville State University (FSU) was developed and compared with data on white teachers at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, a historically/predominantly black institution of similar size. The objective was to ascertain if the difference in cultural settings between the two colleges (small town vs. metropolitan area) influenced choice of employment, assessment of students, professional activities in addition to teaching, and desire to stay with present position. Based on questionnaire responses of 23 white FSU teachers (15 male and 8 female), it was found that the respondents were more likely to be married (57 percent), between 40-44 years old, doctorate degree holders (78 percent), employed full-time, and teaching within their area of specialization, and to have had 11.5 years of teaching experience, 8.1 years of which were at the undergraduate level. Prior to employment at FSU, the white teachers had attended school with black pupils/students (91.3 percent, elementary through graduate school), but were not likely to have been taught by black faculty (43 percent). The need for employment was the main reason for seeking employment at FSU, and most of the teachers were sufficiently rewarded by the position to consider teaching at historically/predominantly black colleges for the remainder of their careers (86 percent). Similarities were found in the reasons the white FSU and Morehouse faculty sought employment, their assessment of the caliber of students being taught, their publishing record, and level of job satisfaction. Lists of colleges attended by the respondents and their academic specialties are appended. (SW)

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WHITE FACULTY AT HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS: A PILOT STUDY

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White Faculty

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this pilot study was to obtain a profile of the white faculty members at Fayetteville State University (FSU). A primary objective was to make a comparison with those white teachers already studied at Morehouse College (a predominantly/historically black institution of similar size) to ascertain if the difference in cultural settings between the two colleges exerted any influence on choice of employment, assessment of students, professional activities engaged in beyond teaching and desire to stay in their present positions. This study was expanded to include prior educational and teaching experience with black pupils/students/faculty. Data gathered for this study was gained through the distribution of a three-part (23 items) questionnaire to the white teachers on the main campus of FSU.

Although the difference in cultural settings (Atlanta, Georgia, in juxtaposition with Fayetteville, North Carolina) did not alter the basic reasons for seeking employment, in the assessment of the caliber of students being taught, publishing and in the sufficiency of job-satisfaction to warrant teaching in a historically black institution as a career choice, comparisons with two previous studies and other related research point to the need for the continuation of studies of this nature to ensure quality instruction at predominantly/historically black institutions via the procurement and retention of scholarly, imaginative and emphathetic teachers, regardless of the race, creed, or ethnic background of the teacher.

WHITE FACULTY AT HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS: A PILOT STUDY

Charles I. Brown and Dolores M. Donovan

INTRODUCTION

From the time of the implementation of the 1954 desegregation order from the Supreme Court, numerous studies have been conducted concerning the effect of the presence of black students on white campuses. Nearly 20 years elapsed before a study on reverse integration was presented. That study by Charles I. Brown and Phyllis R. Stein, "The White Student in Five Predominantly Black Universities" (1972),[1] inspired further research that is still in progress. But even so, one of the several ramifications of reverse integration that still stands in need of further study is the white teacher on predominantly black college campuses.

As to why information gathering and analysis have been so sporadic on the second rather substantial incursion of white teachers on the black campus, specifically, and on the raft of investigative-worthy issues inherent in the larger white presence on the black campus question, no convincing answer has yet been heard. And this inattention is especially strange, in light of the numerous tomes that have given meticulous examination to the first incursion of white teachers on the black campus for all the years beginning with the Reconstruction Period to the onset of the Era of Desegregation.

Compounding the strangeness of the paucity of research on the white presence on the black campus is the seeming prevalence of a hands-off attitude by a larger cadre of competent researchers today when compared with the more diminutive number of education researchers in former times.

But laments, jeremiads and disappointment aside, the point of the above soliloquy is that aside from statistics, mostly unembellished, presented by governmental and educational agencies -- e.g., the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Southern Regional Educational Board -- the literature revealed only two contemporary (since the desegregation ruling in 1954) publications/analyses that dealt specifically with the white teacher on the black campus.

In 1955, Paul M. Decker conducted a study of white teachers in 55 black colleges in 20 states.[2] That study was intended to disclose some personal factors concerning the respondents and to examine their personal reasons for seeking employment in black colleges. It also explored the social relationships of the white teachers and analyzed their opinions concerning contemporary problems in black-white relations. Since this was during a period of time when interracial situations of any kind were looked upon with emotions ranging from misgivings to outright hostility -- views that have not wholly disappeared -- many of the colleges and teachers did not want to participate. So persistence and persuasiveness must have been the watchwords as Decker managed a questionnaire return rate of 34 percent (147/54). The profile presented by Decker of the white teacher has not only proven to be extremely revealing but more importantly, singularly definitive. The durability of Decker's appraisal is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that the study was conducted in the distrustful and fearful atmosphere of the mid-fifties. If a single point in Decker's description could illustrate this, it would be his analysis that, in the main, white teacher and black colleague/student relationships had "nothing whatever to do with race."

From 1955 to 1979, the subject of white teachers on traditionally black college campuses was not pursued. In 1979, Abraham L. Davis, Professor of Political Science at Morehouse, presented a paper on "White Teachers at Black Colleges: A Case Study of Morehouse College."[3] The Davis study had a fourfold purpose: (1) to explore the reasons why white teachers sought employment at Morehouse; (2) to describe their evaluation of the caliber of students whom they had taught; (3) to discuss their success at publishing books and articles; and (4) to explore their future plans with the College.

Although the instrument used was different from that of Dr. Decker's, some comparisons can be made that illustrate the similarities and differences in the assessment of white teachers on the black campus over a 25 year span.

In both studies, white teachers commented on the poor academic preparation of their students: a situation that obviously has not improved significantly in almost a quarter of a century. In 1955, the majority of the white teachers in Decker's study had sought positions at black colleges for "no particular reason," or because of interests in race relations; however, by 1979, although Davis' study did not show percentages, it showed that a group of white teachers at Morehouse was present as a result of commitments to the Civil Rights Movement, but another group was present solely because Morehouse offered some of the few positions available to the teacher seeking employment in colleges today. Davis' study also showed that publications of white faculty members at Morehouse were fewer in number than those of their black counterparts. Both Decker and Davis concluded that the majority of the white teachers desired to continue in predominantly black institutions of higher learning.

Seeking employment at a historically black college because of availability and choosing to remain is not unsual at this time of crisis in higher education. But the crises of decreasing enrollment and the economic "crunch" are attacking the traditionally black colleges in a more insidious manner than they are the traditionally white institutions of higher education.

Questions are being raised about the relevancy of predominantly black colleges, and with a declining birth rate, inflation and recession, that which can be proved irrelevant will be discontinued. Because of this and other Damoclean swords hanging perilously over the viable existence of black colleges, studies which purport to examine the backgrounds, attitudes and job performance of the instructional personnel in these schools are of particular importance at this time. If black colleges are to retain their identity and carry on their essential mission, they must now more than ever before choose and retain their minority faculty carefully.

DISCUSSION

These concerns and others were triggered by the Davis study. Davis pointed out that white teachers are applying for positions on black campuses in increasing numbers, and, in some instances, obtaining more positions, percentage-wise, than their black counterparts in historically white institutions. One other Damoclean-like sign of the times noted by Davis is the rash of reverse discrimination suits that have been filed by whites. By contrast, when Decker conducted his study in 1955, the leaders in black colleges were not only unworried about the civil rights-minded white teachers on the black campus, they were planning expansion programs and welcoming white applicants. Since certain evident changes appear to have taken place in the last 25 years, both economic and attitudinal, a closer look at the teaching personnel in black institutions of higher learning seemed to be warranted.

As a pilot project, Fayetteville State University (FSU) fitted Davis' suggestion that different results might accrue from a study of black colleges in a different cultural setting. Fayetteville State and Morehouse are similar in size, but Fayetteville, North Carolina, has an entirely different cultural milieu from that of Atlanta, Georgia, so perhaps the reasons that white teachers would apply and remain might differ from those at Morehouse.

Validation of the three-part questionnaire used in this pilot was gained by its presentation first to a dozen or so white faculty members at FSU, and second to 15 members of the Institute on Desegregation. Following a revision of the questionnaire, in light of the comments and suggestions received, the questionnaire was distributed to the 43 white faculty members who teach on FSU's main campus. Forty-three constitutes 25 percent of the main campus

teaching force; of this number, usable questionnaires were returned by 23 or 54 percent.[4] The remainder of this section is given over to a discussion of the items posed in the questionnaire.

Section A: Personal and Educational Background

1. Sex: Fifteen or 65 percent of the 23 respondents were male and 8/36% were female.

2. Age:

Intervals	No/%
20-24	1/4.3%
25-29	1/4.3%
30-34	5/22%
40-44	4/17%
45-49	5/22%
55-59	2/8.7%

The median age interval for the respondents is 40-44, an age which can only be considered as fairly young, i.e., in the prime or middle adult years of their maturity, with 20-25 years of teaching service left before voluntary/compulsory retirement.

3. Marital Status: Three of 13 percent of the sample were single; 13/57% married; 2/8.7% separated; and 5/22% were divorced.

4. Highest Earned Degree: Two or 8.7 percent of the white teachers at Fayetteville State hold the baccalaurate as their highest earned degree; 3/13% earned masters degrees; the bulk, 18/78% of the respondents hold earned doctorate degrees.

5. Awarding Institutions: The bevy of degrees won by the respondents had been awarded by 37 different institutions, some of which are instantly recognizable as institutions of academic renown (See Appendix A). Note should also be made of the fact that because of certain denigrating circumstances -- social and economic in

both the past and the present -- this bedecking quality would have been an almost impossible attainment at FSU independent of white teaching personnel.

6-7. Fields of Specilization and Teaching Area: All of the respondents reported that they were teaching in the area of their academic specialization(s) (See Apendix B).

8. Twenty-one or 91.3 percent of the respondents teach full-time at FSU, while only 2/8.7 percent teach part-time.

9. Teaching Experience:*

Level	Responses	Range(Yrs.)	Median(Yrs.)
Elementary	2/8.7%	1-3	2
Secondary	10/43%	1-9	3.1
Undergraduate	16/70%	1-29	8.1
Grad/Professional	10/43%	5-8	2.9

*For the male sample (15 or 65 percent), the number of years teaching ranges from 1-32. The median for teaching on all levels was 11.3 years; for the undergraduate level the median was 6.8 years. For the females (8 or 35 percent), the spread in the number of years teaching was 2-23. The median for teaching on all levels was 12 years and 9.4 years on the undergraduate level.

Section B: Prior Learning/Teaching Experience with Blacks

10. When asked whether their own educational experience included attending school with black pupils/students, again 21/91.3% said yes as against only 2/8.7% who had not.

11. When asked the level of school and percentage of black pupils/students with whom they had attended school, this question drew the following responses:

Level	Responses	Range %	Median %
Elementary	12/52%	0-50	6
Secondary	13/56%	0-9	9
Undergraduate	12/52%	0-100	16
Grad/Professional	11/48%	0-30	6

12. When asked the percentage of black faculty at schools they had attended, the responses were as follows:

Level	Responses	Range %	Median %
Elementary	13/56%	0-16	2.3
Secondary	13/52%	0-20	3.4
Undergraduate	12/52%	0-65	11.8
Grad/Professional	11/48%	0-20	4.4

13. When asked about the levels on which they were taught by black faculty, the answers were:

Elementary	9/39%	Undergraduate	11/49%
Secondary	11/48%	Grad/Professional	13/56%

14. When asked whether this was their first teaching experience at a historically/predominantly black educational institution, there was a Yes response from 18/78% and No from 5/22%.

15. The five or 22 percent who indicated they had prior teaching experience at a predominantly black institution offered as their best estimate the following percentages of black pupils/student/faculty with whom they had worked:

Level	Response	% Pupils/Students	% Faculty
Elementary	2	10-100	10-100
Secondary	1	10-100	1-100
Undergraduate	2		1

16. When asked to name the historically/predominantly black college or university at which they had taught, six institutions were named by 5/22%: Egbado College, Nigeria; Fayetteville State University was mentioned by one who had formerly taught part-time at FSU before assuming a full-

time teaching position; mention was also made of Metropolitan State College in Denver, Colorado, as being a true minority school because of its one-third white, one-third Mexican and one-third Indian student body composition. Among the responses more expected were Morgan State University, Texas Southern University and Winston-Salem State University.

17. The reasons cited for seeking employment at FSU by 18/78% fell into four main categories: (a) Need for employment; (b) Professional; (c) Personal; (d) Chance encounters.

Responses typical of each category:

a. Need for employment - I was out of work and needed a job...the basic job squeeze made the position attractive...Actually it was the only place open to me.

b. Professional - Wanted to teach at a relatively small university that was growing...My preference was to teach in the university system...I like to teach and prefer an institution which emphasizes good teachihg, as this one does...recruited to initiate new and/or bolster fledgling programs.

c. Personal - I thought it would help the general society of Eastern North Carolina...After spending an equal amount of time at both kinds of institutions, I chose this one. I would like to think that I can give my students at least one positive experience with a member of the opposite race (I've had so many)...Because of my children needing to get away from all-white small towns...Recruited by FSU and found the employment to my liking, had worked for civil rights' causes and this experience was a natural development in my educational career.

d. Chance Encounter - I met _____ at a professional meeting, was offered a professorship which I accepted and have been here ever since...I was in the neighborhood and was made aware of a vacancy.

18. When asked for an assessment of academic style and caliber of students whom they have taught at this institution, 19/82.6% responded with answers that ran the gamut from -- abysmally poor in both skills and motivation...Below average...Poor in relation to other students I have taught...through...About average for rural poor...Wide range of styles and calibers...Fair to poor with some rewarding exceptions...Most of my students have had a weak background, but experience has proven that most of them have considerable potential for learning...Once motivated they usually do well...My students respect education and are more likely to challenge me in order to get what they want from their educational experience...As always, generalities are always false, including this one. I find most of them are very poorly prepared for college work, however, a number are highly motivated. Some are very bright, ambitious and on their way to making a place for themselves...Divided, some are excellent students who are benefitting a great deal from their college experience, while others are here for reasons other than learning...It is hard to generalize because there is a wide variety of students. Some are very poorly prepared and little motivated, but many of them are highly motivated, hard-working students...I find them to be equal to my white students in general ability and to be much more responsive once they get to know me as an instructor...Some very good, some middling, some fair. I see no difference generally speaking among students at state institutions. As everyone knows, admission requirements are higher at some institutions than they are at other institutions.

19. When queried if prior teaching experience with black pupils/students would have been advantageous, 15 of the white teachers responded. Ten of the respondents, a two-to-one margin, answered the question both affirmatively and succintly, e.g., of course...Some...I did have prior teaching experiences and I do think it helped.

The five dissenters were far more eloquent in stating their position; e.g., one said - No, in my case, being an undergraduate at a predominantly black college, tutoring, working with freshmen and just making friends was all the experience I needed. Another said - Not really, the crux of the matter is that what we are dealing with here is an open admission situation where there is likely to be just such a wide variety of students, and this is an experience I had before coming here. A third respondent said - No, I believe my teaching career at FSU has been a successful one, and I do not believe it would have been improved on by having previously taught black students.

Section C: Professional Activity of White Teachers at FSU

20. Publications: Fifteen or 65 percent of the respondents indicated they were published authors. Two or 8.7 percent had published articles; 7/30% had authored one or more books. Interestingly enough, 1/4.3% averages four book review publications per year while another has authored five study guides and one brochure. Publications pending for the entire sample are one article, one book, one book of poems and one novel.

21. Professional activity beyond teaching/publications drew a 100 percent response. A breakout of this professionalism is shown below:

	Local	State	Region	Nat'l	Intn'l
Member of Learned Associations	5/22%	6/26%	8/34%	14/60	5/22%
Officer of Learned Associations	1/4%				
Presentation of Papers	1/4%	4/17%	6/26%	5/22%	
Consultant	9/39%	4/17%	1/4%	2/9%	3/14%

22. The teaching experience of 20/86% of the respondents has been sufficiently rewarding for them to consider continuing on at a historically or predominantly black institution of higher education for the remainder of their academic career. Three or 13 percent of the responses were of the "it depends" variety; e.g., on the emphasis and aims of the university and the weighing of a desire to teach on the graduate level because of the additional maturity and superior investigative skill graduate students can bring to the furtherance of research projects.

23. Twelve or 52 percent of the respondents offered a broad spectrum of comments, suggestions and issues that the questionnaire should have addressed. Among the concerns raised were those that dealt with (alphabetical listing) administrative bureauracy and intransigence, classroom facilities, equipment and supplies, discrimination against and mistreatment of the white teacher solely because he/she is white, issues of a social nature addressing the lack of interracial faculty/administration collegiality, and the amount of contact the white teacher has with black people in non-professional situations. A final category of responses received pleaded for the opportunity to teach as innovatively as they knew how.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A composite of the personal and educational background of 23 white teachers (15/6% male, 8/35% female) at Fayetteville State University drawn from data furnished to a tripartite questionnaire study indicates that the white teacher is more likely to be married (57%), between 40-44 years of age, to hold a doctorate degree (78%), is employed full-time and teaches within the area of his/her specialization, has taught 11.5 years of which 8.1 years has been at the undergraduate level.

Prior to his/her employment at FSU, which is a first teaching experience at a historically/predominantly black institution for 18 or 78 percent, the white teacher had attended school with black pupils/students (91.3%, elementary through graduate school), but is not likely to have been taught by black faculty (10 or 43 percent).

The need for employment is the prime reason the white teacher sought employment at FSU, and he/she sees the student body as being composed of a wide range of learning abilities and motivations. Though many problems, both large and small, remain to be solved, the white teacher finds the experience sufficiently rewarding to consider teaching at historically/predominantly institutions of higher education for the remainder of his/her academic career (20 or 86 percent).

These findings are not significantly different from those of Davis, despite the disparity between the small-town cultural setting of Fayetteville and the metropolitan cultural setting of Morehouse, nor for that matter are they significantly at variance with the Decker findings. However, in the conduct of this study, some old and new problems were uncovered that indicate a pressing need for further research that will point out - to everyone's satisfaction - the underlying factors that hinder the most fruitful development of black colleges and universities.

A first and somewhat startling indication of the need for a closer adherence to the implementation of research findings is the assessment cited by Decker 25 years ago relative to the inadequate academic preparation of black students; albeit unfortunate, it is undeniably true that black students still enter college today ill-prepared.[5] In addition to the Davis assessment, additional support for this view may be seen in a September 1979 report of the National Advisory Committee on Black Higher Education and Black Colleges and

Universities.[6] It is noted that historically black colleges "enroll a disproportionately large share of underprepared and economically disadvantaged students... not...adequately appreciated or equitably compensated for in Federal financial aid and educational inequalities, but without the traditional black colleges, many students would be denied the opportunity to prove their potential at other institutions." This argument in favor of the continuation of blacc colleges is further supported by the National Advisory Committee report when it concludes that aside from the impressive number of baccalaureate degrees received by black students from black colleges and the increasing number of blacks who advance to graduate and professional schools, "a large proportion of the black leadership in this country...attended Black colleges."[7]

Another factor is the more than 31.9% increase in the number of white teachers on black campuses (8% in 1955: 39.9% in 1975).[8] This is, in itself, a figure to be examined carefully. Scrutiny of this rather dramatic increase would include the needs of accreditation and, of course, the omnipresent economic needs continuing as the paramount reason white teachers seek employment at predominantly black colleges and remain there. Scrutiny should also include the prevailing moderate to low publications productivity rate of these teachers and the corresponding importance of choosing and keeping only those who are most imaginative, innovative, and scholarly.

Finally, if our judgement of the comments received as to the worthwhileness of this research effort is accurate, upon replication, questions comparable to the probing type personal questions posed by Decker should be included. That a repeat of this study on a state/regional/national level, utilizing an improved or debugged questionnaire, would not only argue for the preservation

of black colleges during and beyond the present economic crisis, but also because such a study would provide tangential if not direct insight on how to obtain and retain the most competent teachers available, regardless of their color.

In concluding this pilot study, little if any evidence has been turned up that would support the contention that white teachers should be excluded from historically/predominantly black institutions of higher education or for corrolary proposals that would call for their immediate or gradual expulsion. In lieu of a return to semblances of the bad old days of yesteryear when the law and the "cake of custom" dictated the separation of teachers and learners by race, it is our view that teachers, both white and black, should be teaching where they are wanted and needed, not where they have to teach. Second, it is our opinion that for the foreseeable future it will be necessary for all teachers in black colleges and universities to be mindful of the unequal education that has been foisted upon too large a segment of students before their entry into college; and in this light, the act of teaching must exhibit patience and understanding, not condescension. Third, that all teachers should be urged to "grow" academically, not stagnate in security. And fourth, that when teaching competency is apparent (a common measurement is student learning), encouragement and even more tangible rewards should be the largess bestowed upon such a teacher, again regardless of race, creed, or color.

NOTES

[1]Charles I. Brown and Phyllis R. Stein, "The White Student in Five Predominantly Black Universities," The Negro Educational Review, (October 1972) 148-169; Charles I. Brown, The White Student on the Black Campus, (Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1973); Nancy V. Standley, White Students Enrolled in Black Colleges and Universities: Their Attitudes and Perceptions, (Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1978).

[2]Paul M. Decker, "A Study of White Teachers in Selected Negro Colleges," Journal of Negro Education, 24:4 (1955) 501.

[3]Abraham L. Davis, "White Teachers at Black Colleges: A Case Study of Morehouse College," The Western Journal of Black Studies, 3 (Fall 1979) 224.

[4]For the 1979-80 school year, the total full-time instructional faculty at both FSU's main campus and the Fort Bragg Center is composed of 52 percent blacks and 48 percent non-blacks. Sixty-two percent of the full-time instructional faculty on the main campus at FSU is black, while 38 percent is non-black. Of the non-black group, 25 percent is white the intended subjects of this study. The Fort Bragg Center is made up of 83 percent non-black and 17 percent black full-time faculty.

[5]Ill-prepared in this context, means low verbal and math scores on CEEB-type instruments; other indications of being ill-prepared are gross deficiencies in communicative skills and the skills necessary to effective and efficient studying.

[6]Black Colleges and Universities: An Essential Component of a Diverse System of Higher Education, (Washington: National Advisory Committee on Black Higher Education and Black Colleges and Universities, 1979) xvii.

[7]Black Colleges and Universities, xix.

[8]Black Colleges and Universities, 37.

Appendix A

INSTITUTIONS AWARDING DEGREES TO 23 WHITE TEACHERS
AT FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

Appalachian State University
Auckland University, New Zealand

Barnard College
Bowling Green State University
Bradley University

Columbia University

Delaware State College
Duke University

East Carolina University
Eastern Illinois University
Eastern Washington State University

Florida State University

Hunter College

Iowa State University

McMaster University, Ontario, Canada
Methodist College

Northwestern Missouri State University
Northwestern University

Ohio University

Park College, Kansas

State University of New York-Genesco

University of California-Santa Cruz
University of California-San Diego
University of Colorado
University of Denver
University of Illinois
University of Iowa
University of Mississippi
University of Nebraska
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina-Greensboro
University of Northern Iowa-Cedar Falls
University of Pittsburgh
University of Virginia

Wagner State College
Washington State University
Western Carolina University

Appendix B

FIELDS OF ACADEMIC PREPARATION/SPECIALIZATION AND AREAS IN WHICH 23 WHITE TEACHERS AT FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY ARE TEACHING

American Literature
Art
Astronomy

Biology
Botany

Chemistry-Organic, Physical
Computer Science

Education
English - Literature, Composition, Creative Writing

History

Mathematics

Physics
Psychology

Reading

Science Education
Speech

Theater